

Austin Police Department

Officer-Involved Shootings: 2007-2016



Prepared by the Austin Police Department
Research and Planning Unit
August 2017

Background

This analysis is conducted to better understand the characteristics of officer-involved shootings in APD's jurisdiction. Ultimately, the report may assist in identifying how training and/or procedures might be revised to improve APD's response in officer-involved shooting situations.

Overview

This report reflects all officer-involved shootings that occurred from 2007 through 2016 in Austin. It includes incidents in which APD or non-APD officers fired their weapons within the city of Austin as well as incidents in which APD officers fired their weapons outside the city of Austin.

Officer-involved shootings are defined as:

- an incident in which an officer fired his/her firearm intentionally at a subject;
- an incident in which an officer fired his/her firearm unintentionally and struck a subject; or
- an incident in which an officer used a less-lethal firearm, struck the subject, and contributed to the subject's death.

There were 58 officer-involved shooting incidents in Austin during this timeframe, involving 78 officers and 60 subjects.

The report is organized into three sections:

- Incident characteristics
- Officer characteristics
- Subject characteristics

Sources

Versadex; APD Special Investigations Unit; APD Training Academy; APD Professional Standards; APD Human Resources; Austin Park Police; Travis County Sheriff's Office; U.S. Marshals Service; Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission.

Special thanks to the following law enforcement agencies for providing comparison data from their jurisdictions: Albuquerque PD; Baltimore PD; Charlotte-Mecklenburg PD; Dallas PD; Denver PD; El Paso PD; Fort Worth PD; Fresno PD; Honolulu PD; Indianapolis Metropolitan PD; Jacksonville SO; Metropolitan Nashville PD; Oklahoma City PD; Portland Police Bureau; San Antonio PD; San Diego PD; San Jose PD; Tucson PD.

Notable Findings

This report contains the following noteworthy findings:

- Over half of the incidents (53%) **occurred at night** and the vast majority (85%) **occurred outside**.
- Over half of the incidents (54%) **occurred in a parking lot or a yard/courtyard**.
- The most common reason for initial officer contact was a **disturbance call** (24%).
- **Most officers (58%) were informed by dispatch before arriving on scene that the subject was armed**.
- The **most common weapons used by subjects** were guns (66%).
- **Thirteen officers were injured** (16% of total).
- **More than half of the subjects were killed** (52%), and an additional 32% were injured.
- It was most common for officers to have **between two and five years of law enforcement experience** at the time of the incident (40%).
- Most subjects (68%) were **between the ages of 20 and 39**.
- **Almost half of the subjects were White** (47%), 30% were Black and 22% were Hispanic.
- Subjects had been **arrested on average five times** prior to the incident.
- Austin experienced **31% fewer shootings** (subjects) than the average for other US cities of comparable size.

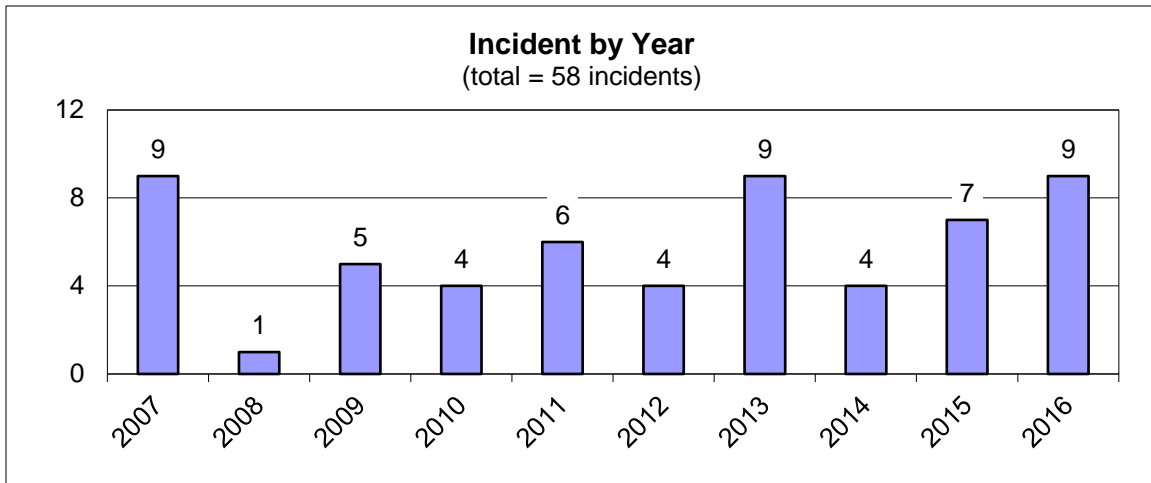
Table of Contents

Incident Characteristics.....	5
Timing.....	5
Location.....	7
Call Type	8
Police Presence.....	9
Less-Lethal Force	9
Shots Fired and Hits	10
Subject Weapon	11
Injuries	11
Officer Characteristics.....	12
Department.....	12
Demographics	12
Weapon	14
Experience and Prior Involvement.....	15
Disposition	16
Subject Characteristics	17
Demographics	17
Criminal History	18
Comparison to Other Cities	19
Appendix: Map of Incidents	20

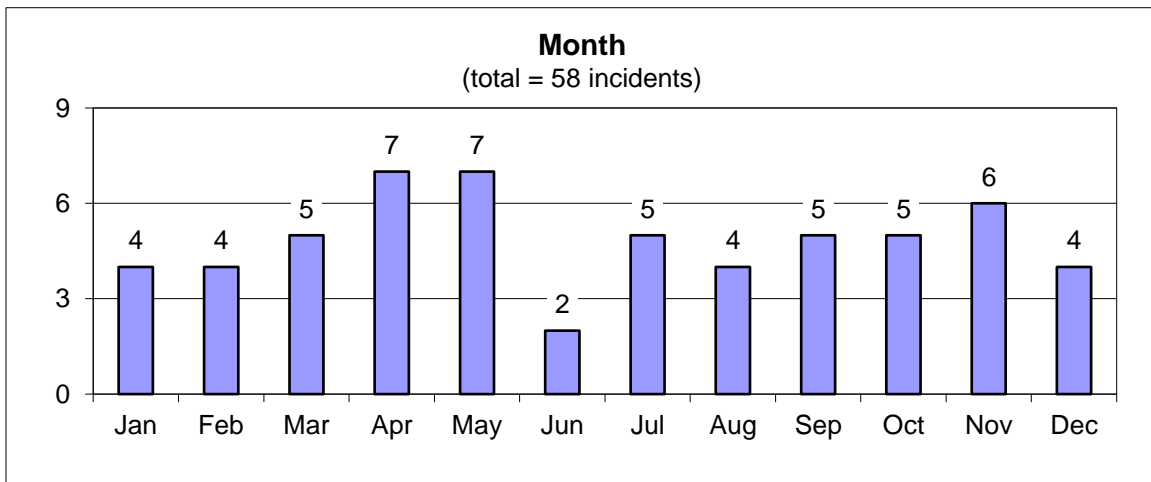
Incident Characteristics

Timing

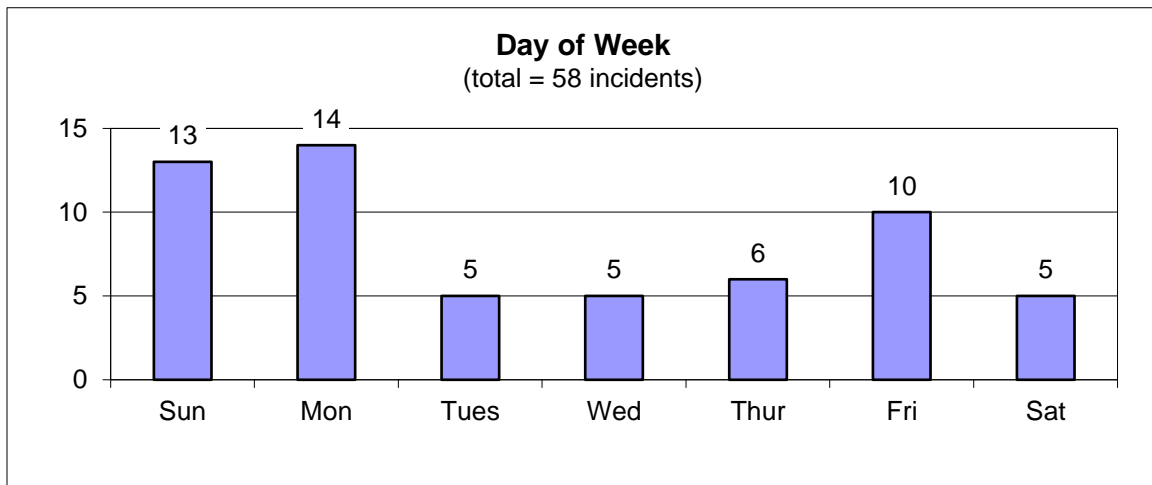
During the years 2007 – 2016, Austin experienced 58 officer-involved shootings. The most recent year tied with 2013 and 2007 for the highest number of shootings (9). The average was six shootings per year.



April and May were the months with the most officer-involved shootings.

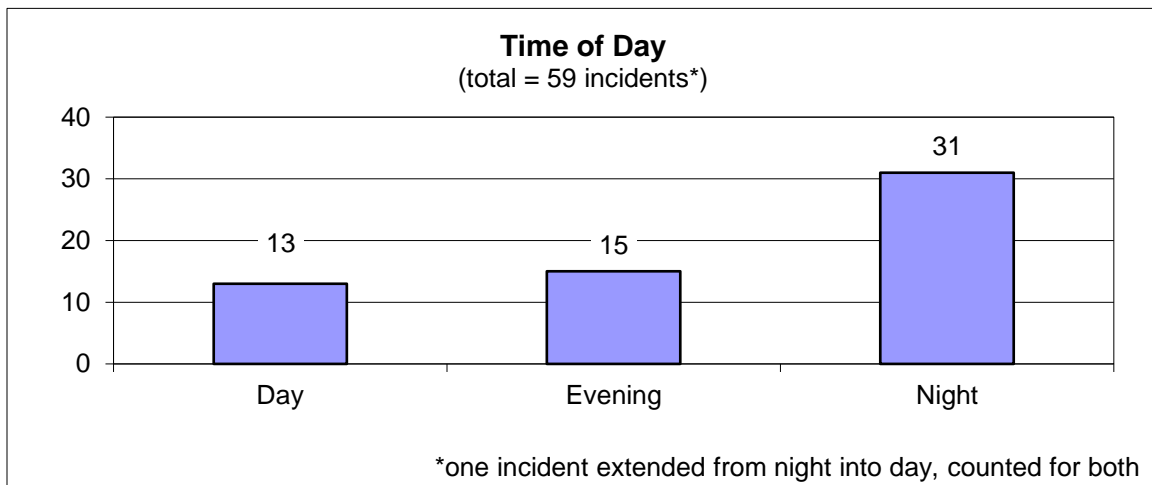


Sunday and Monday are the most common days for officer-involved shootings.



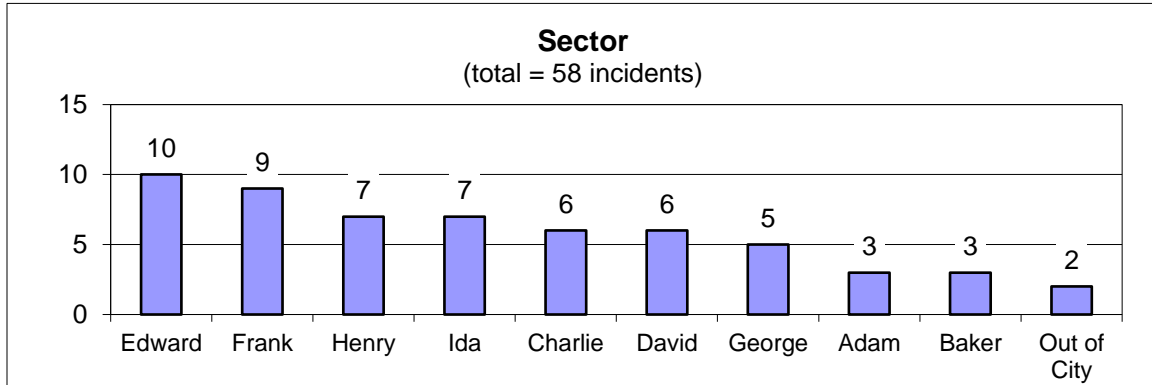
More than half of the incidents occurred at night (53%). Time frames were based loosely on patrol shifts and were defined as follows:

Day: 06:00 - 13:59
Evening: 14:00 - 21:59
Night: 22:00 - 05:59

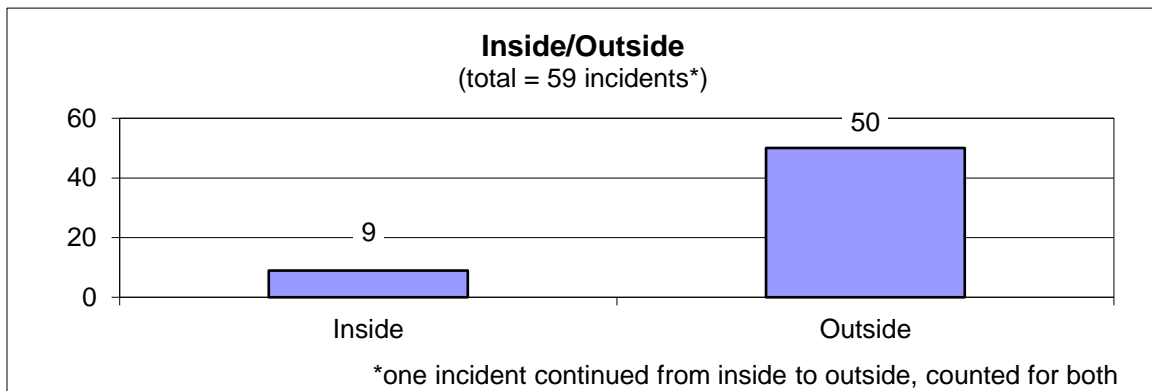


Location

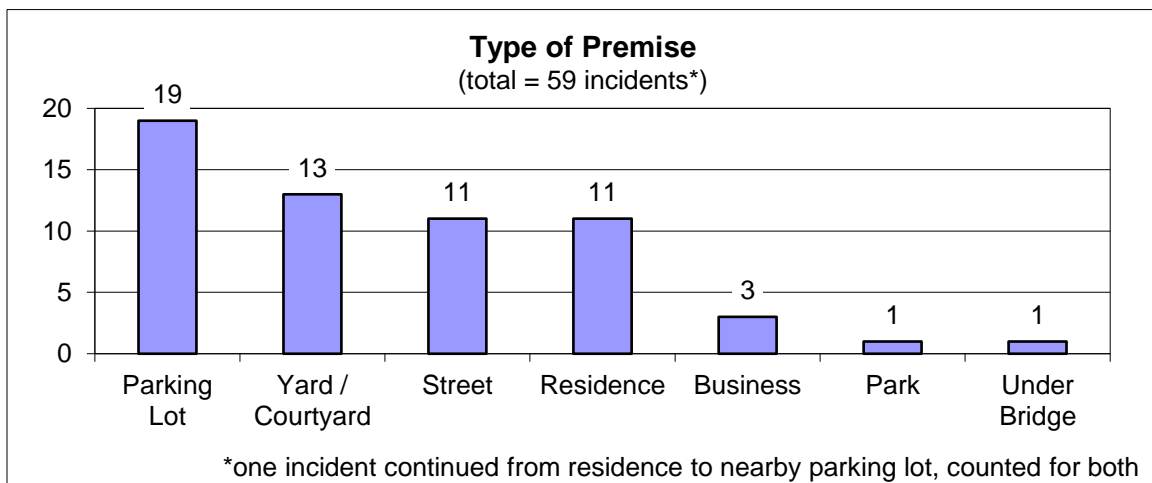
Incidents were slightly more common in Edward and Frank sectors. Two incidents occurred outside of city limits. A map showing the location of each incident is provided on page 20.



A majority of incidents occurred outside (85%), and only 15% occurred inside.

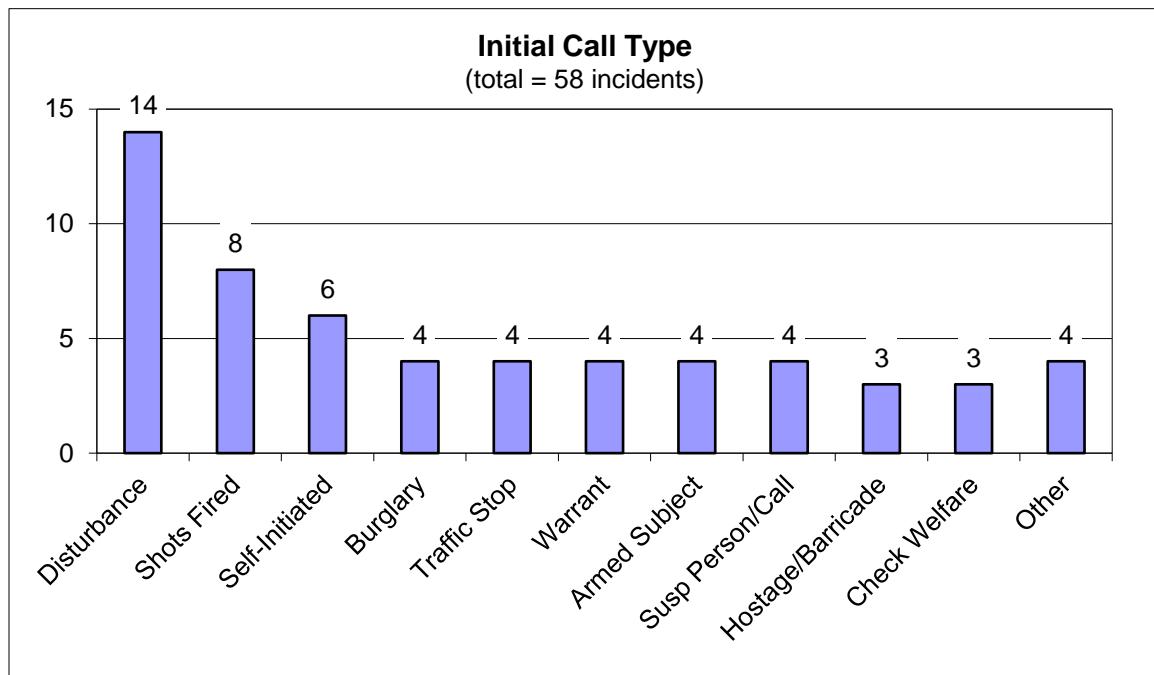


The most common type of premise for an officer-involved shooting was in a parking lot, yard or courtyard (a combined 54% of incidents).

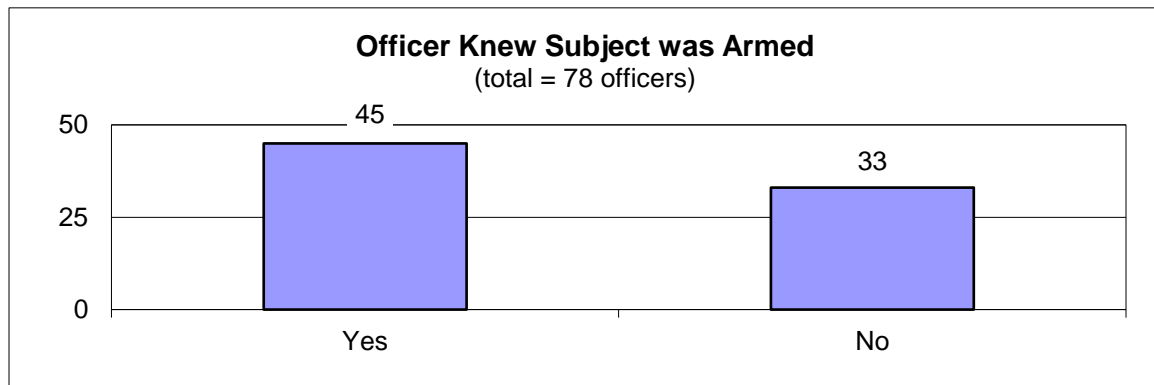


Call Type

Reasons for the initial contact between the officer and subject(s) varied. Disturbance calls were the most frequent type (24%) that ended in an officer-involved shooting.

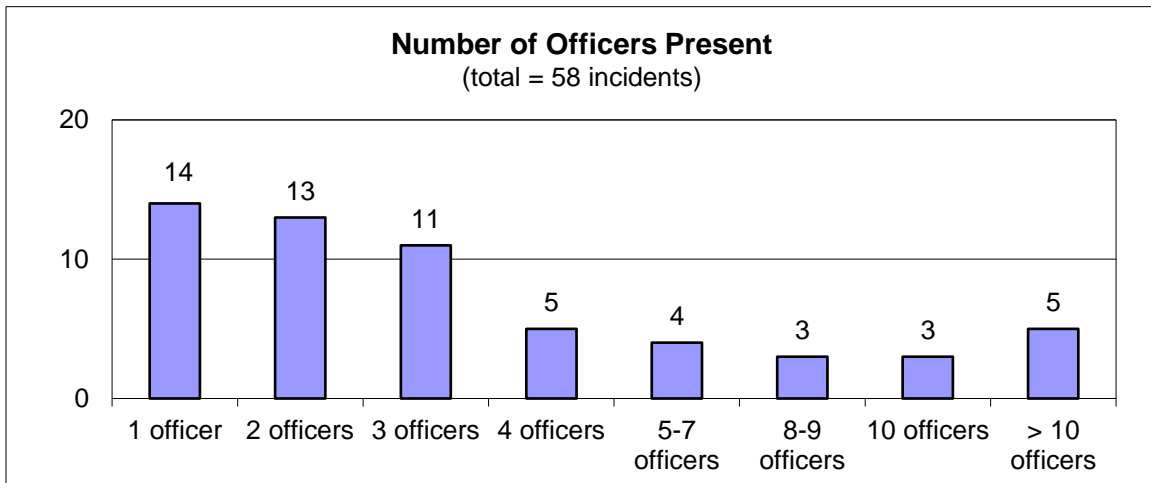


The majority of officers (58%) were informed by the dispatcher – before arriving on scene – that the subject was armed. For 13 of the “No” officers, the subject did turn out to be armed.



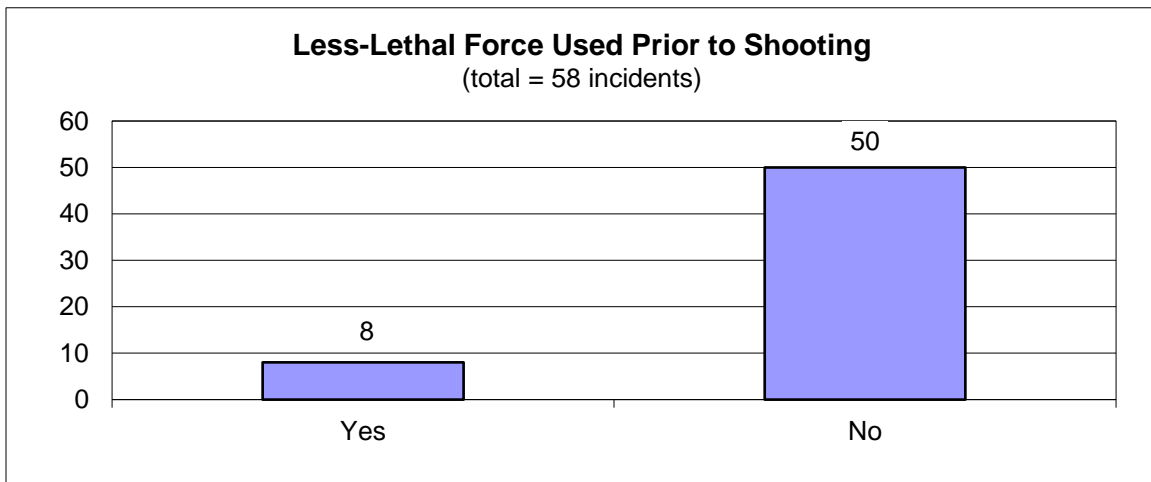
Police Presence

When incidents are examined by total number of officers present, the most common scenario (47% of incidents) was for one or two officers to be present during the shooting.



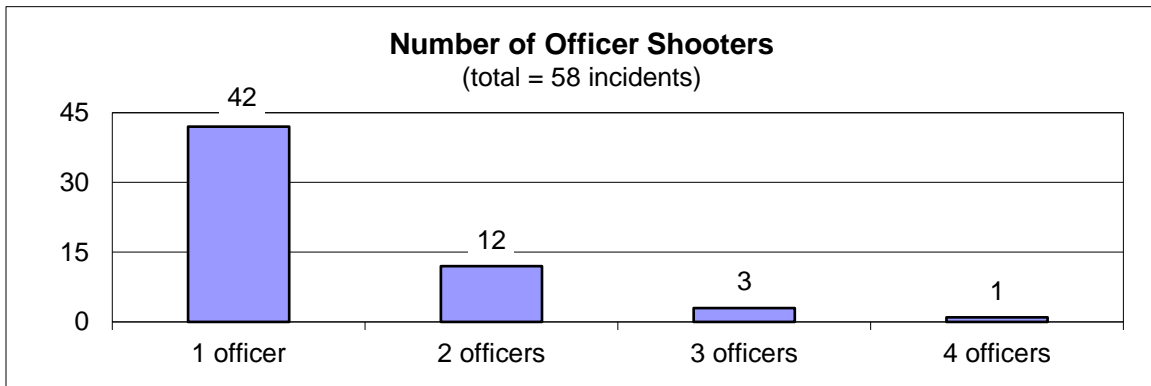
Less-Lethal Force

Less-lethal force was used by APD prior to using a firearm in eight incidents. Less-lethal force includes: weaponless (e.g., pressure points, hand/leg strike), OC (“pepper”) spray, Taser, impact weapon (e.g., baton), or K9 (police dog). Taser use was most common (five of the eight incidents).

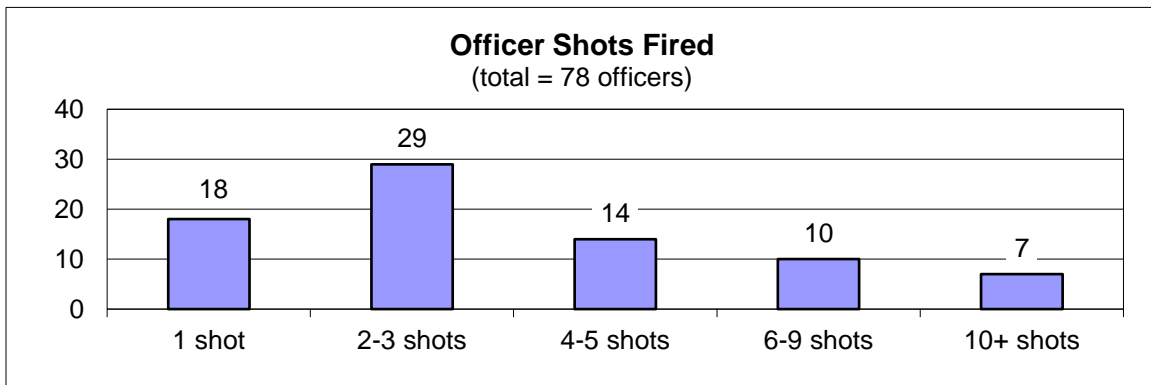


Shots Fired and Hits

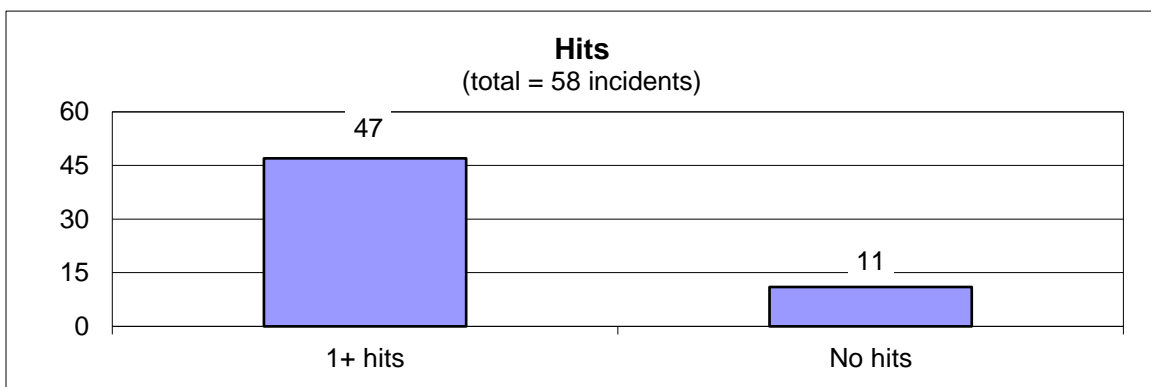
Looking at number of officers shooting, regardless of how many officers were present at the scene, it was most common that only one officer was the shooter (72% of incidents).



It was most common for officers to shoot 2-3 times (37%).

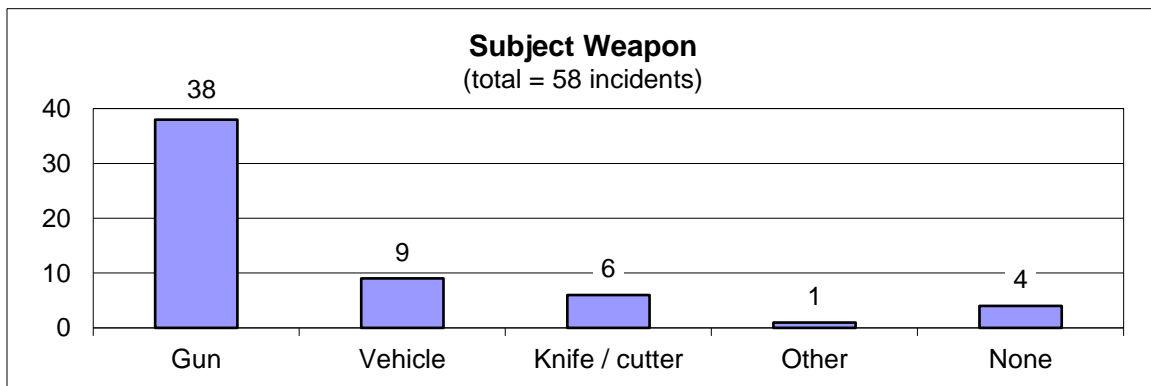


In 81% of incidents, one of the fired shots hit the subject.



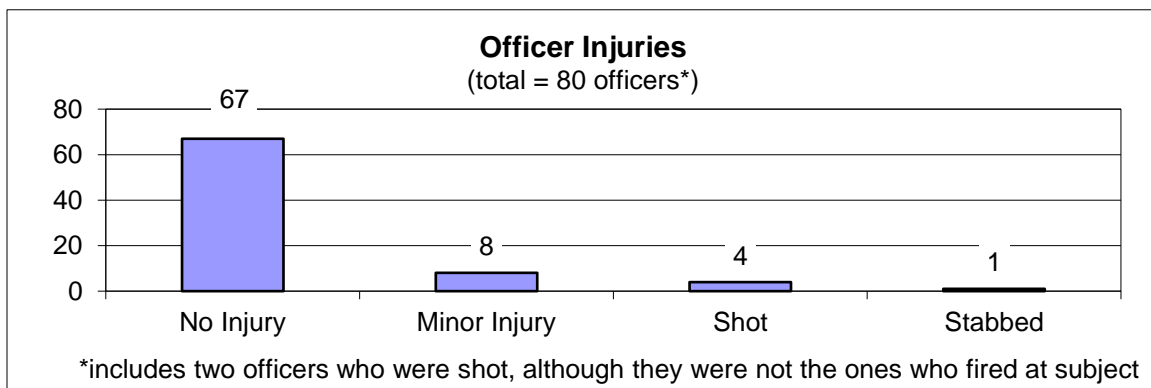
Subject Weapon

Guns (including handguns, rifles, shotguns, and air pistols) were used in the majority of the incidents (66%). The next most used weapons were vehicles (16%).

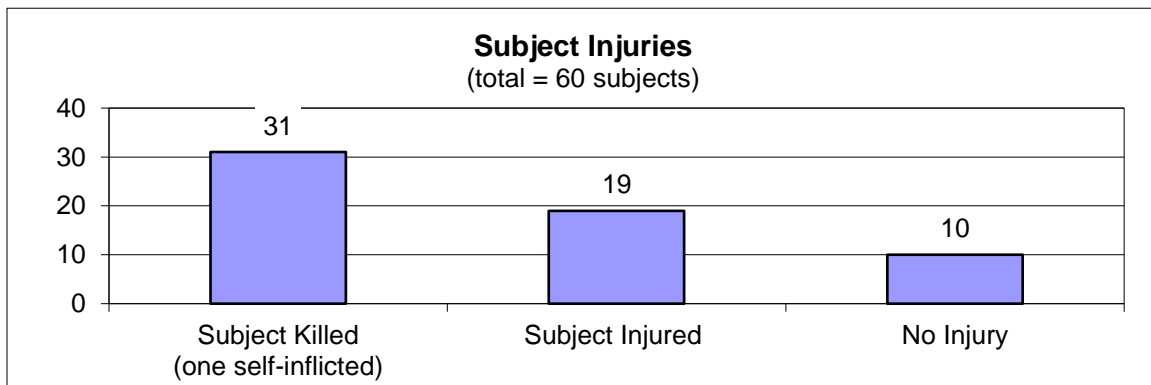


Injuries

Of the officers involved in shooting incidents, the majority (84%) were not injured. Of those injured, most sustained only a minor injury including abrasions or a broken finger. This chart includes two non-shooting officers who were shot in incidents. No officers were killed during officer-involved shooting incidents.



Of the 60 subjects involved, over half died as a result of the incident (52%), and an additional 32% were injured.

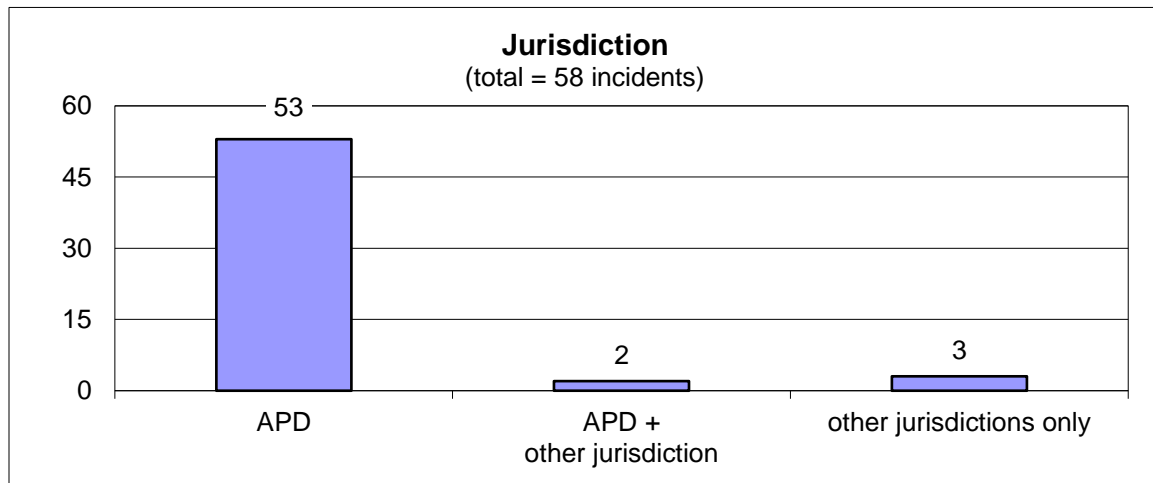


Officer Characteristics

The 58 officer-involved shootings that occurred in Austin from 2007 through 2016 involved 78 officers.

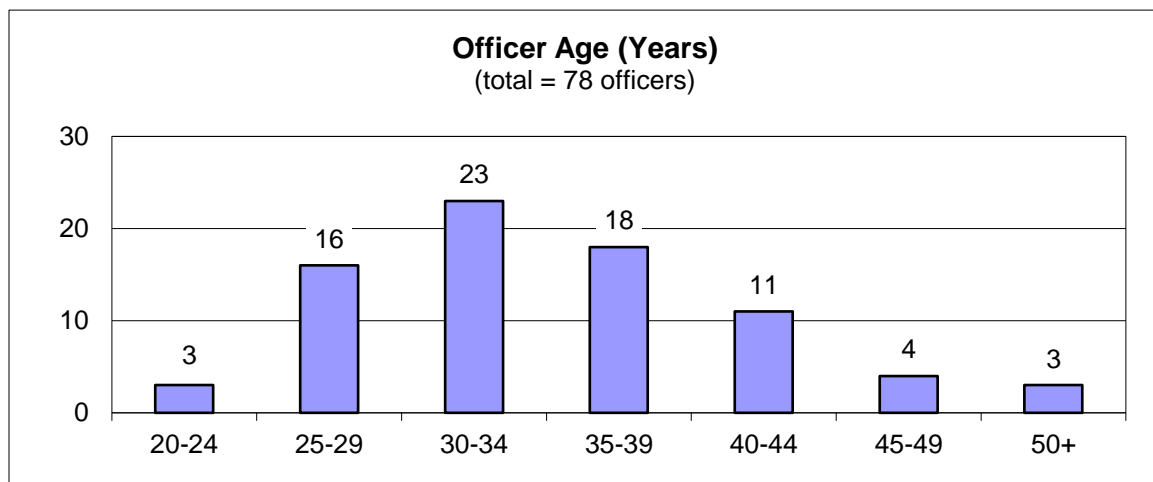
Department

Most shootings involved APD officers only (91% of incidents). Three incidents involved only officers from other jurisdictions, including Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission, Travis County Sheriff's Office, and the U.S. Marshals Service.

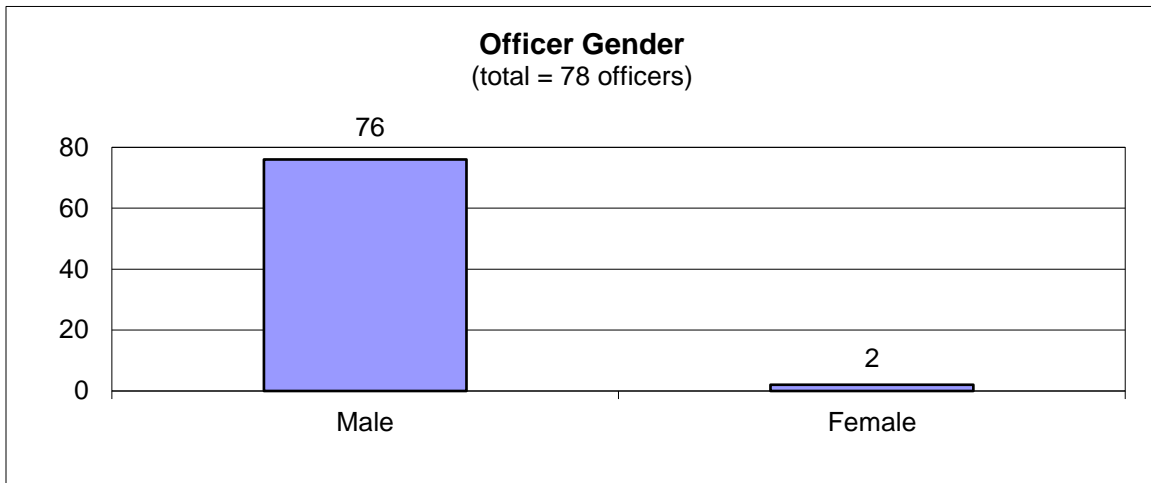


Demographics

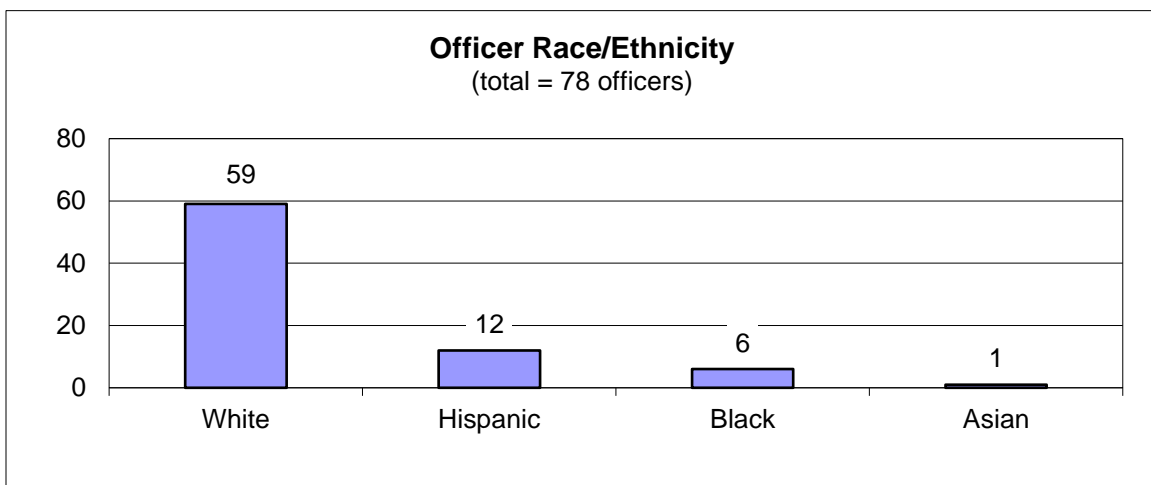
More than one-quarter of officers (29%) were between the ages of 30-34 at the time of the officer-involved shooting.



All but two of the officers involved in shootings were male (97%). As context, in December 2016 APD's sworn population was 90% male and 10% female.

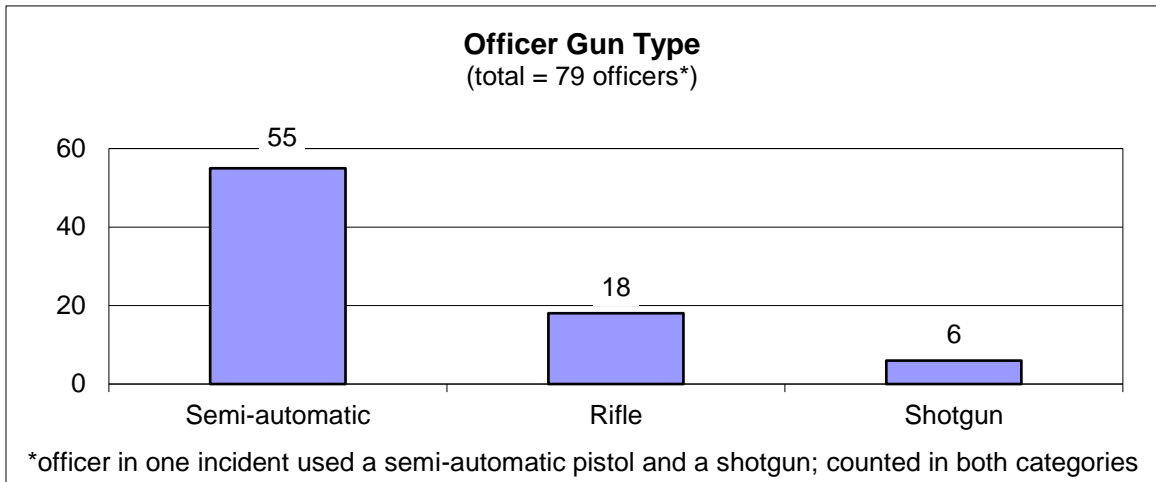


Most officers involved in shootings were White (76%), followed by 15% Hispanic, 8% Black, and 1% Asian. As context, in December 2016 APD's sworn population was 69% White, 20% Hispanic, 8% Black, and 2% Asian.

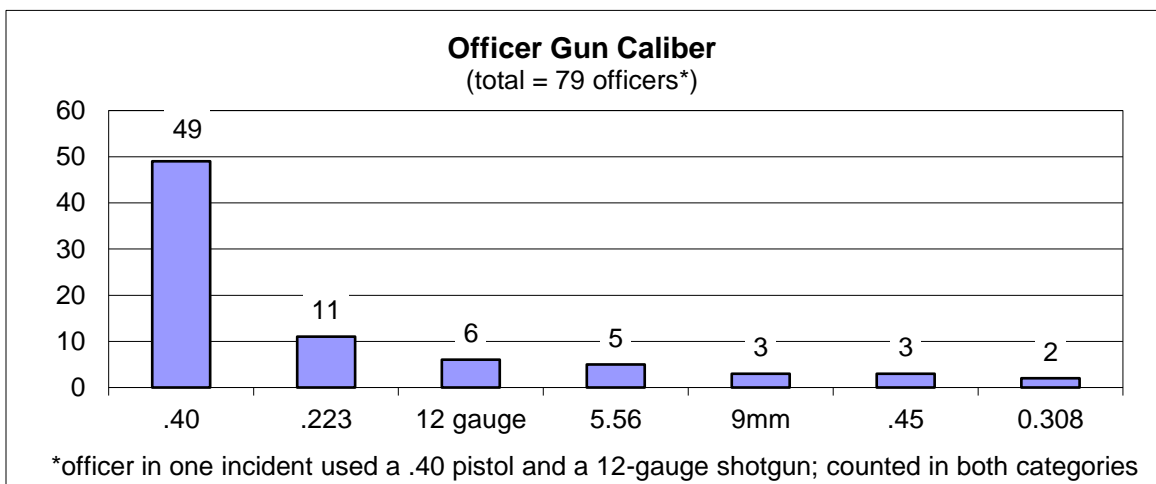


Weapon

Most officers involved in shootings fired a semi-automatic gun (70%).

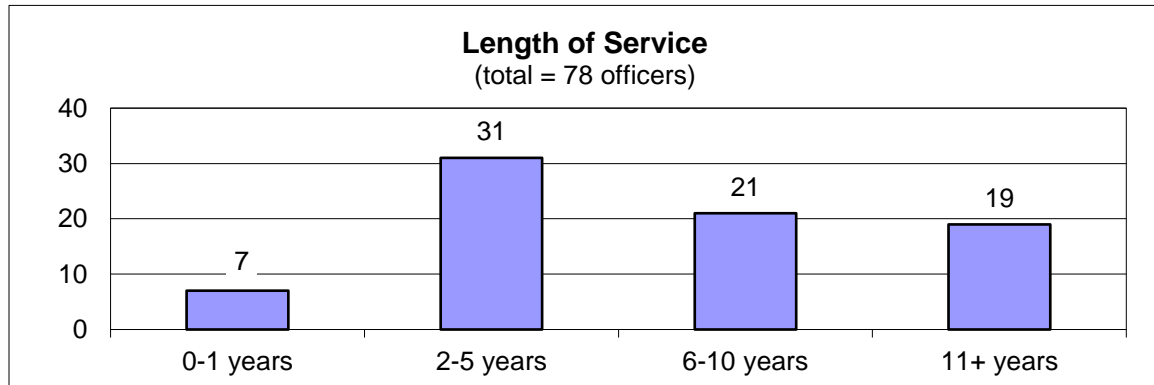


The caliber used most frequently in officer-involved shootings was .40 (used by 62% of officers).

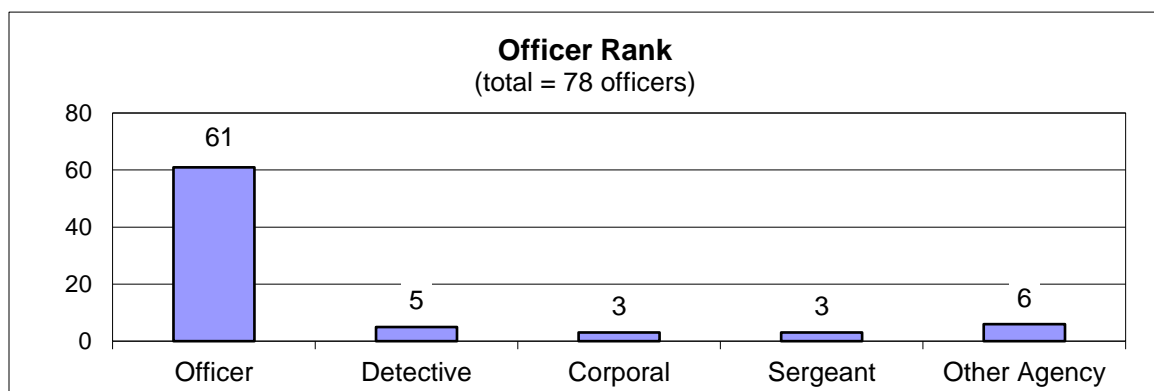


Experience and Prior Involvement

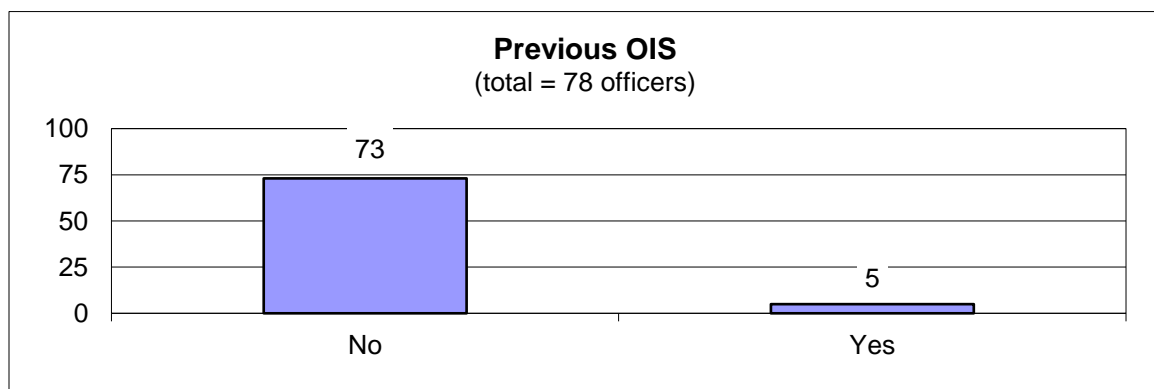
In terms of experience, officers most commonly had between two and five years of law enforcement experience at the time of the officer-involved shooting (40%). This includes years of experience at APD as well as other departments.



The majority (78%) of officers involved held the rank of APD officer.

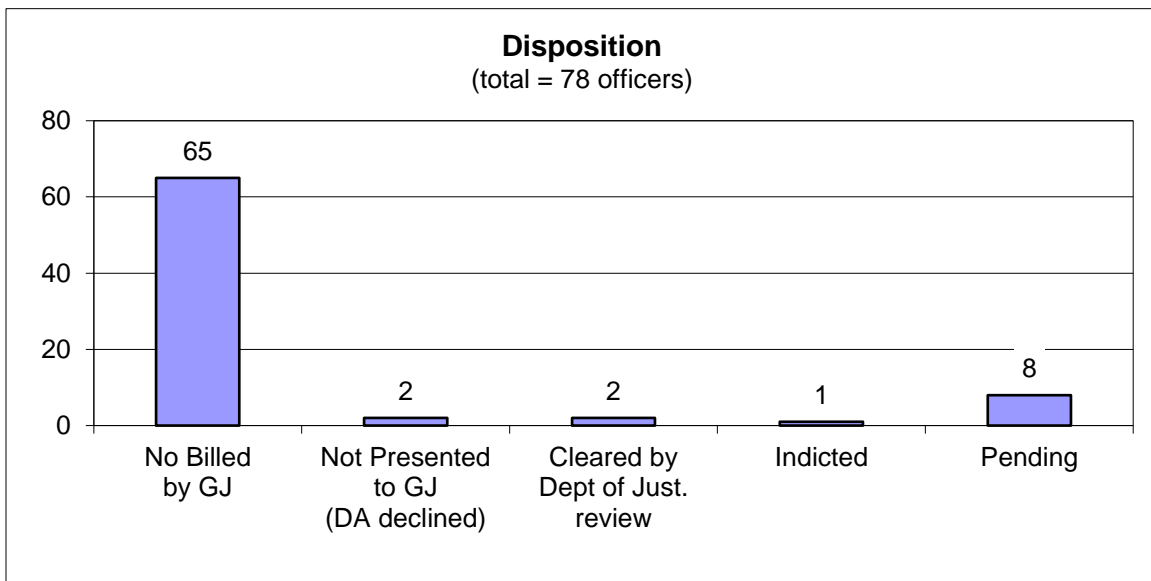


Most officers (94%) had not been involved in a prior officer-involved shooting in Austin since 2000.



Disposition

The majority of officers (83%) were not indicted by a grand jury ("No Billed by GJ"). In two cases, there was an insufficient basis to present the case to the grand jury.

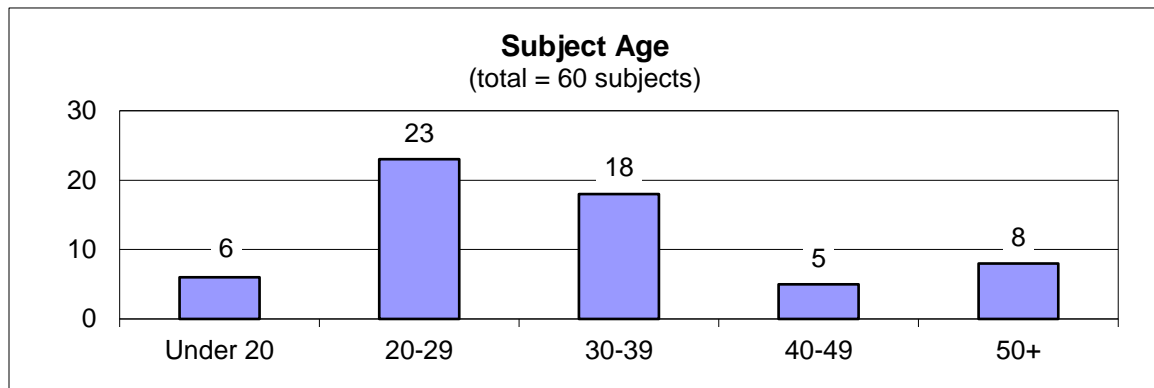


Subject Characteristics

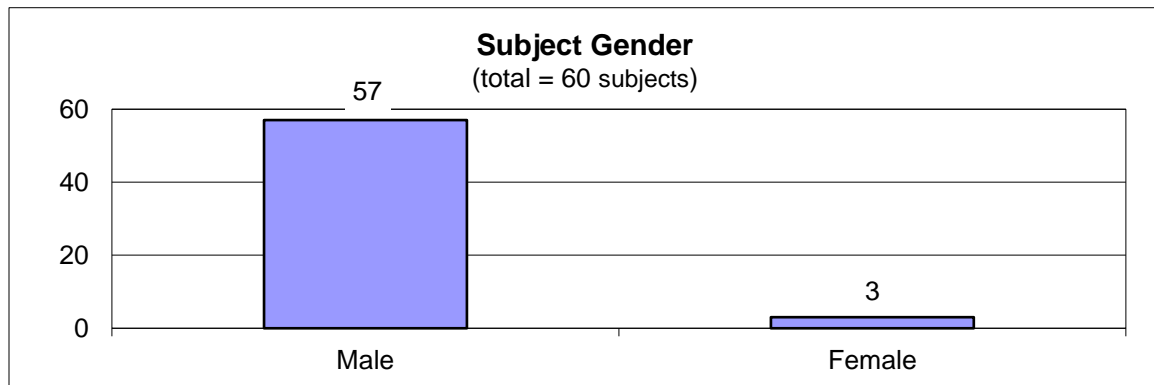
There were 60 subjects involved in the 58 officer-involved shootings that occurred in Austin from 2007 through 2016.

Demographics

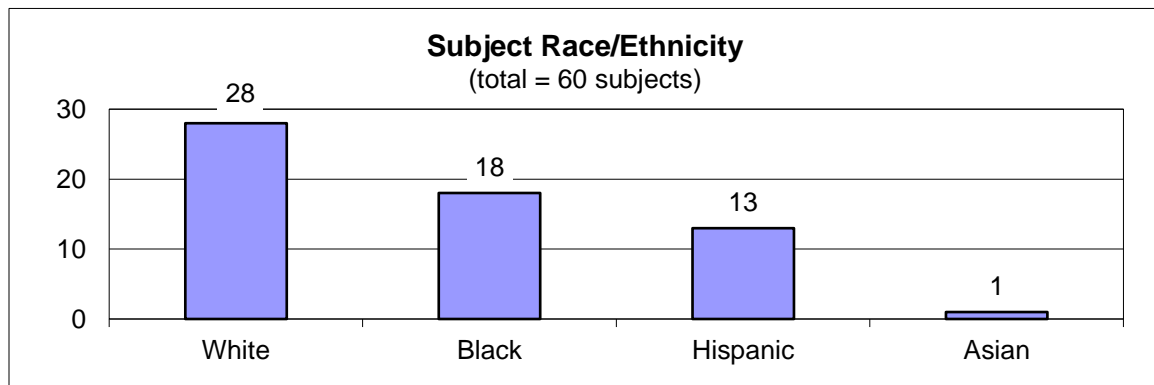
The majority of subjects (68%) were between the ages of 20 and 39 years.



Most of the subjects were male (95%).

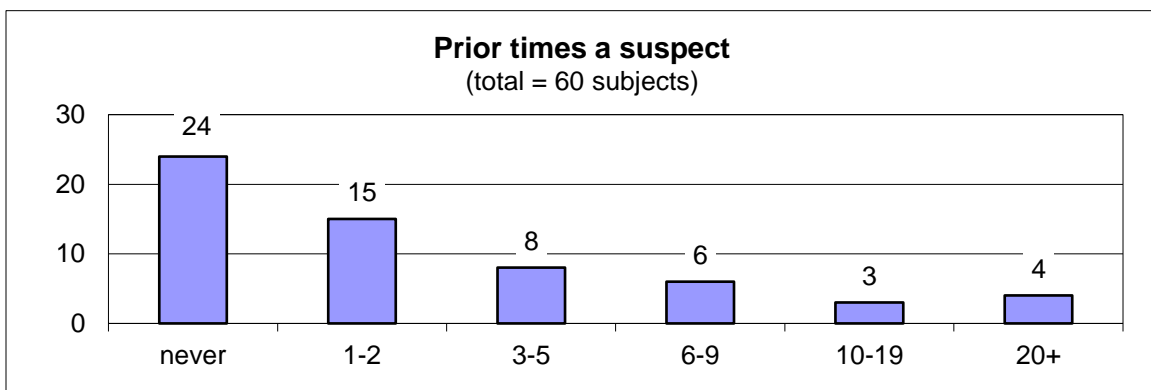
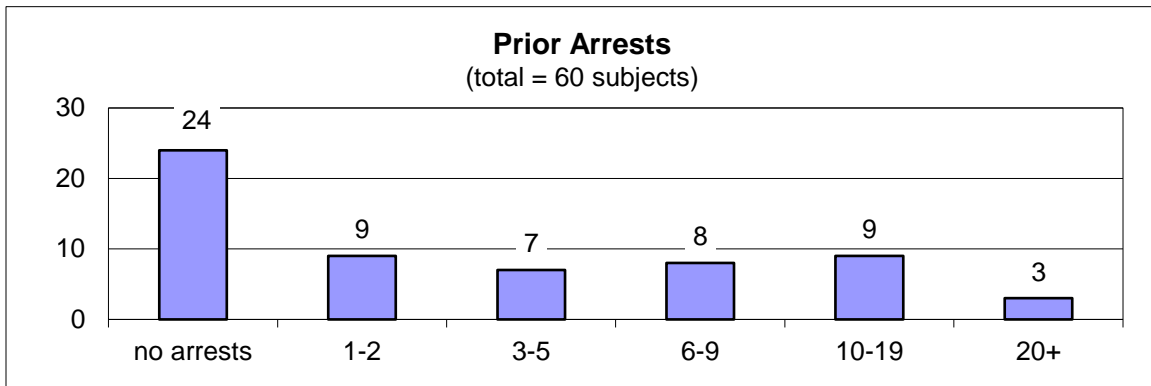


Subjects were most commonly White (47%), followed by 30% Black, and 22% Hispanic.



Criminal History

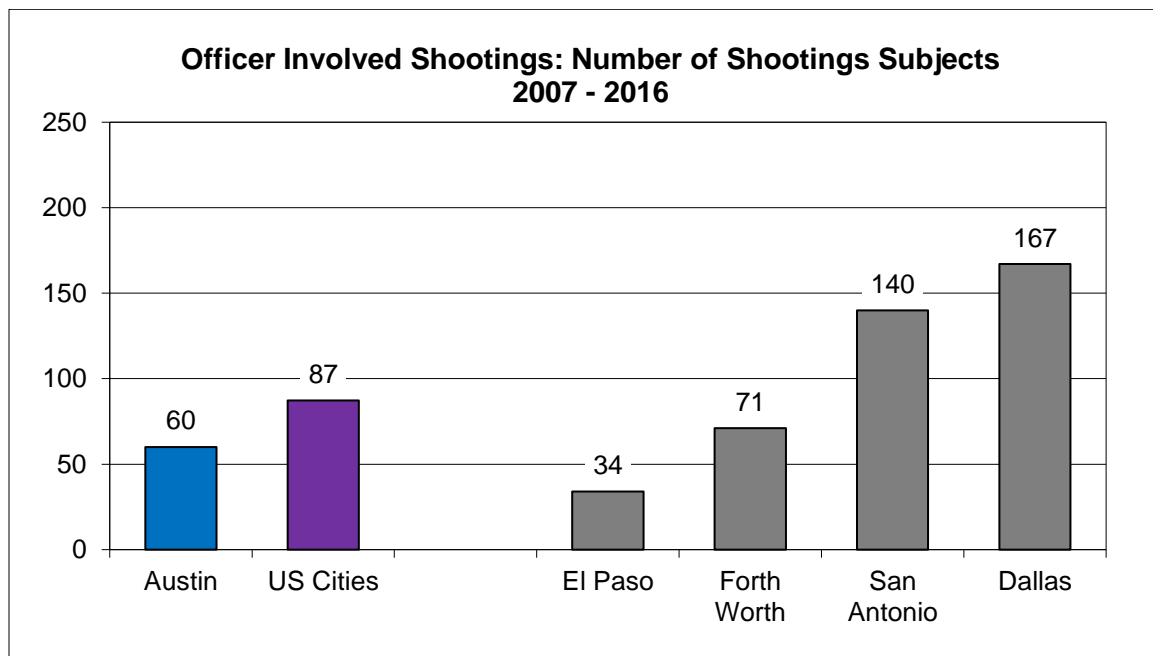
Most subjects had been arrested at least once (60%) or been a suspect at least once (60%) prior to the officer-involved shooting.



Comparison to Other Cities

The following summarizes total officer-involved shooting subjects for Austin, and US cities of comparable size (500,000 – 1,500,000 residents) for the years 2007 through 2016.

As noted, Austin had 60 OIS subjects for the 10-year period. That was 31% lower than the 87 shooting subjects averaged by other US cities of comparable size.



Note: Comparison data was gathered and shared with permission from other jurisdictions. The following cities are included in the above “US Cities” average:

- Albuquerque
- Baltimore
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg
- Dallas
- Denver
- El Paso
- Fort Worth
- Fresno
- Honolulu
- Indianapolis
- Jacksonville
- Louisville
- Nashville
- Oklahoma City
- Portland
- San Antonio
- San Diego
- San Jose
- Tucson

Appendix: Map of Incidents

